

Faversham Society Newsletter

May 2021

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Spring Signs - see page 3



From the chairman

HAROLD GOODWIN

Move to 12 Market Place

In the three weeks before Christmas running a stall outside the town hall at 12 Market Place, we realised how much more advantageous it would be if our shop was in the heart of the town, opposite the Guildhall. The Faversham Society has, therefore, decided to move the Fleur shop and visitor information centre there.

We have reached an agreement with the town council to rent about one-third of the ground floor space. Being in Market Place will increase our visibility in the town, enabling us to engage with more residents and visitors, and increase footfall in the shop.

The revenue earned through our two shops is vital to the sustainability of the society, enabling us to maintain the Fleur complex and pay for insurance, heating and electricity. In due course, our second-hand bookshop in Gatefield Lane will move to the Fleur, where it will have far more space.

The town council is moving to exhibit the charters in the rear downstairs room and visitors will enter through our shop when we are open. The exhibition will be self-guided and free and our volunteers will encourage people to visit

There will still be space for community meetings, events and exhibitions in 12 Market Place. We shall be able to provide more information about Faversham's heritage and Faversham Museums Together will be able to promote themselves as well as the natural, built and cultural heritage of Swale.

The Faversham Society's board agreed to this move in March. There is a small working party pressing ahead to develop our new presence. This group includes Christine Smith, our volunteer manager of the VIC and shop, who said: "It's brilliant. I am excited by the opportunity this brings to promote

Faversham and Swale's heritage at the heart of the town."

We're open

Meanwhile, the Fleur shop and the VIC have both reopened. Do visit when you are in town. The Fleur shop opens Sunday to Thursday (10am-1pm) and Friday and Saturday (10am-4pm). The second-hand bookshop will be open Monday to Saturday (10am-3.30pm) and is closed on Sundays.

Abbey Fields

The society has prepared a long and detailed objection to the proposed development of 180 houses on Abbey Fields on the grounds that the proposed development is not necessary for Faversham (or Swale) to reach their respective housing quotas; b) would aggravate already serious traffic flow problems on the Whitstable Road; c) would infringe on a local wildlife Site that also has important amenity functions for residents; d) has already been rejected for housing development in the emerging Local Plan; and e) would damage irreparably the characteristic view from the northeast of Faversham as a historic port town. This application must, therefore, be rejected.

As long as there is no new Local Plan in place, we are very vulnerable to unwanted speculative planning applications for large-scale housing developments. This edition of the newsletter carries our view of the Local Plan. The society has expressed its strong opposition to what amounts to a disproportionately large and unfair allocation of additional housing to Faversham and says: "Although the society remains strongly opposed to the development of extensive housing to the east, we have concluded that if additional housing is imposed upon us, we cannot walk away. Rather, we must work to mitigate its worst effects. We are determined that the mistakes of the past should not be repeated."

Creek Bridge

David Melville represented the society at a meeting convened by Helen Whateley, the MP for Faversham, to hear about progress on the creek bridge. By June the design work should be completed with provision to allow eel migration. Challenges remain. There is still work to be done on dredging, the sluice gates, securing the necessary funding, and managing and maintaining the new bridge. A more detailed note of the meeting is on the society's website.

Church Glories

Dr Sheila Sweetinburgh's talk on Faversham Parish Church's magnificent painted pillars can be found here. Well worth watching!

Alan Swan

Alan Swan was the Fleur Museum's expert on local Scouting and Osborne Plaques, has died. He was 83.

Lottery

The society receives half of whatever you spend on Town Lottery tickets and 10% goes to other local causes, so if you are buying tickets, please think of us. [Click here](#). Brogdale Collections have also donated an annual family orchard pass which will be drawn on the 1 May lottery.

Spring Signs!

I'm delighted to see that Faversham's guerrilla knitters have been out and about again. We had a lovely festive scene to welcome 2021 and now there is this family of ducks to mark the arrival of spring.

Half-timbered town

Jonathan Carey of the Faversham Society is featured in a Faversham Life piece by Amicia de Moubray about the town's half-timbered buildings, including Arden's House, TS Hazard

and the Shepherd Neame reception centre.

Jonathan, a conservation architect, says of them: “They would have been terribly draughty. The gaps between the timber frame would have been filled in with hazel twigs and straw, before an outer layer of cow manure mixed up with clay. Inevitably the panels would shrink and expand according to the vagaries of the climate, thus creating draughts.”

The Rec's heritage on show

BEN SIMON

As part of a Heritage Lottery-funded project to renew Faversham Rec, the story of this Victorian public space is being investigated with the help of residents who have contributed old newspaper cuttings, articles and their memories of the site in times gone by.

This information, with historic photographs of the Rec reproduced by permission of the Faversham Society, has been used to create a temporary display that will be put up along the east walk (alongside the former creek railway) for the May Bank Holiday on 3 May.

The information boards will be spaced at least two metres apart, and will be attached to the old trees that line this route. It is hoped to keep the display up

for a week, and that it will encourage both visitors and regular park users to explore this treasured landscape.

In addition to this temporary exhibit, a more permanent storyboard will be put up at the Rec later this year. This will display transcripts of conversations about the area, recorded as part of an oral history scheme. If you have memories about the recreation ground that you could contribute, please contact me, Ben Simon, activity co-ordinator, Swale Borough Council, on 07925 148303 or at

FavRec@swale.gov.uk

The Long and Winding Creek

The musician Geoff Sandiford has written a new work, *The Long and Winding Creek*, a multimedia presentation, with period photographs illustrating the songs. It will be available on a DVD, which can be played on any PC or laptop. Geoff hopes to perform the musical with a live band when circumstances permit.

It will be available at the Fleur shop along with his other musicals, *The Skate Boys of Faversham Town* and *Our Beautiful Town*, which uses the legacy of the Faversham Society as its theme.

Here are three songs from it:

Too Many Bends

To navigate our creek, you need skill and technique what with so many bends it lets us down, Opportunities squandering, this creek's so wandering, it takes too long to get to town. Let's invite an engineer, to come up with an idea I have heard, that he's one of the best around Find a solution to our convolution, stop our ships running aground.

Thomas Telford is the man, he will have a plan, a solution to our problem he will see Your creek circuitous, my plan fortuitous the answer is go from A to B

A ship canal that's straight and true, Hollow shore to Standard Quay, bigger ships will easily put to sea Such a tortious route will become a safe commute the winding creek will be history.

Poisoning our Oysters

Got a new water closet – in fact they're all the rage! No more slopping buckets, we've turned another page

It's so much more hygienic to flush it all away. I wonder where it goes to? I really couldn't say.

But the creek is rather smelly now the weather's hot. It looks a lot like sewage. Please tell us that it's not!

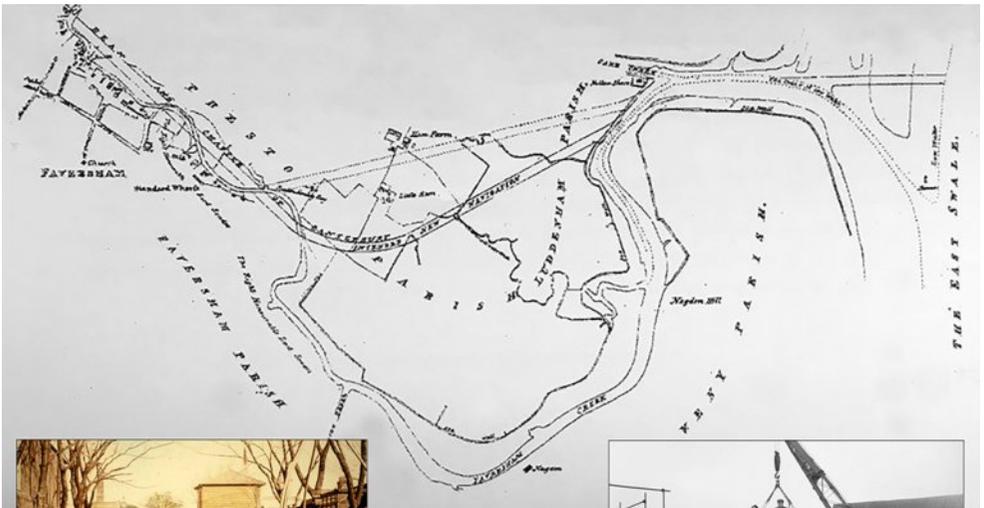
Here comes the Pioneer, watch her paddles turn! There's something in the water to make your stomach churn.

The headline in the paper, 'Dirty Barge Surprise'. Everyone blames them for the oysters' demise.

Dick Dadson's Boat

The crane hoists her high, drops her on the tide, The Eider Duck is launched, let's take a ride!

This boat's for me and my wife, full steam ahead. Not bad for a cabin cruiser, built in my shed



Understanding the past

PAT REID

Antony Millett's article in the March newsletter, stimulated by that excellent film *The Dig*, intrigued me. What he said about the looting of the Dark Ages Kingsfield cemetery by railway builders and then later by brick-workers is, sadly, true as is the subsequent scattering of the grave goods to a variety of museums and private owners.

What perhaps Antony didn't mention is that this snatching from the ground and unmonitored selling of goods means that however beautiful and finely made the artefacts are, they have lost their historical context. With that, they have lost their role in the story of the past. They have become simply beautiful and extremely valuable objects (the more "plebian" grave goods are left in the archives).

If Kingsfield had been properly excavated, this is what we would have learnt about those early Favershamites: what kind of person was buried dressed in a particular collection of items. Were they tall? Short? Male? Female? Young? Old? Wealthy? Poor? Healthy? Ravaged by sickness (if so, what kind of sickness)? Handicapped? Locally born? Born somewhere else (if so, how far away)? What was their activity during life – plough pushing? Weaving? Horse riding? And so on.

I have carried out a lot of work with human skeletal remains and – I know this sounds rather contrary – I feel that nothing brings the person back to life more vividly than their skeleton. I worked with people buried in a Mid-Anglian cemetery in Norfolk for a long time and they were a remarkably well built, tall, strong-jawed, high-foreheaded folk, men and women alike.

The most fascinating (and slightly hair-raising) point was that we saw their descendants' distinctive rectangular jaws and splendid teeth smiling and raising a pint to us in the local pub in the evenings.

Proper excavation of Kingsfield would also have led to greater understanding of the rituals and customs of the burial. The thing that makes Sutton Hoo so extraordinarily fascinating is not only the fact that it was a an extravagantly pagan ship burial but the King of the Anglians, Raedwald, was a convert to Christianity although his wife resisted conversion.

Did he lapse in the end? Or did his wife overrule the priests and order a pagan burial with all the trappings of great wealth (a good Christian would have left it all to the church, of course) or is it the wife who was buried here? (I heard the latter suggested by the

eminent Martin Carver in a lecture – the audience gasped, mostly with delight!) I must add that the body had decayed, with only a phosphate stain left behind.

Since the Faversham Society Archaeological Research Group (FSARG) was founded in 2004, we have several times run archaeological projects called Hunt the Saxons. We have found small items left by Anglo-Saxon Favershamites, such as Mid-Anglo-Saxon Ipswich ware. This was the first mass-produced pottery produced and marketed since the end of Roman Britain – crude pottery made on a slow wheel but revolutionary in terms of linking people back into a cash economy in everyday goods after a 350-year gap.

One of the Faversham Ipswich ware sherds was found associated with a beaten chalk floor and post holes in a garden next to Gatefield Lane, near the Faversham Club. But it was not until 2018-19 that we really found those elusive early Anglo-Saxons in the grounds of the Market Inn.

At the Market Inn, we excavated a huge rubbish dump which had been tipped into a rectangular pit. This pit was the remains of what archaeologists call a sunken featured building (SFB) or grubenhous. We found huge amounts of

animal bone from feasting, bone comb and pins, lots of pottery including imports from Francia, masses of evidence for ironworking ... and the ultimate prize, a red glass necklace bead that matches exactly those of a necklace from the Kingsfield cemetery: we have found our people.

We are not the only ones. Professionals excavating at Perry Court before to building work found two SFBs with similar pottery content to the one at Market Inn. There were also hints of one a few years ago at the site of the apartments on the corner of Abbey Street and Church Street. The Perry Court ones are very probably linked to a hall site which later became Domesday-listed Perry Court Manor. So where do you think the Faversham royal hall was? Try this: draw a triangle using the Market Inn, the Faversham Club and the Abbey Street/Church Street corner. Look within it. Any ideas as to where that original royal manor stood? Theories to me, please, via the newsletter.

We have ended up a long way from a wish to have the Kingsfield items on display in the Fleur museum. I would support Antony in this (provided the society can afford the colossal insurance costs) – but would want these items to be accompanied by the more everyday items found since then in actual

contexts, with the story of the people told to weave it all together.

Too many of our museums, to my mind, are antiquarian displays of expensive items, often looted from abroad. Until we reach that new Faversham display, however, if you are interested in Anglo-Saxon Faversham read Chapter 5 in my 2018 book *Faversham in the Making* (available through KCC library or buy from the Fleur) and go to the FSARG website www.community-archaeology.org.uk and look up HSX19 OA186. Enjoy – and if you are digging your Faversham garden keep your eyes open!

PS One last point directly to Antony about the British Museum's display. About 20 years ago I took my granddaughter Alexandra, then aged seven, to the Sutton Hoo Early Anglo-Saxon Room in the British Museum. As a game, I gave Alex paper and pencil and asked her to see how many times she could find objects with a Faversham origin label. She shot around the room and found at least 20! Brooches, daggers, and especially glassware. Now, since then that room has been done away with and the Sutton Hoo display integrated into a European long gallery. So, both of us are right on this. The redesign was the right thing to do really but the Faversham stuff has nearly all ended up back in the archives.

Half-timbered town

Jonathan Carey of the Faversham Society is featured in a Faversham Life piece by Amicia de Moubray about the town's half-timbered buildings, including Arden's House, TS Hazard and the Shepherd Neame reception centre. [Click here.](#)

Jonathan, a conservation architect, says of them: "They would have been terribly draughty. The gaps between the timber frame would have been filled in with hazel twigs and straw, before an outer layer of cow manure mixed up with clay. Inevitably the panels would shrink and expand according to the vagaries of the climate, thus creating draughts."

Don't say arch, say sarsens

PAT REID

On 8 April, a rumour swept around town that the construction recently started at the Faversham end of the A251, near the fire station, had uncovered the remains of a Roman arch.

That would be an extraordinary find for Faversham – about 1,800 years ago when Kent was part of the Roman Empire, there was plenty of activity around here linked to Watling Street but not of the grand city-style that produces grand arches. Even the villas

round here were quite modest and Durovernum, the small town at Syndale, was a working town, not a grand city or fortress.

Sadly, the least inspection of the photograph of the “arch” shows it to be a collection of natural sarsen stones, with characteristic “bubbling” effect and curious natural shapes. A closer look shows no evidence whatsoever of working by man.

These concretions of sand formed at the lower part of the Thanet Sands 68 million years ago and ended up lying on the chalk beneath when the Thanet Sands were worn away over the years. We’ve seen them before around here, near the bier house at Ospringe, for example. Brett’s Gravels built a miniature Stonehenge out of sarsens they found in their gravel extractions.

I’m sorry to disappoint you.



Faversham Society Response to the Local Plan at REG19

Although there is much talk of localism, all planning decisions must be compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and national planning legislation. The Swale Local Plan, and the Faversham Neighbourhood Plan, will be tested by the Planning Inspectorate against the NPPF. Both Swale & Faversham plans fail if they are found not to be compliant with central government policy. The Inspectorate's role is to enforce national government policy.

It is important to distinguish between the Swale Local Plan and the Faversham Neighbourhood Plan. Members of the Society are engaged with the Town Council in its endeavours to achieve the best possible Neighbourhood Plan for the development of our town within the significant limits to what is possible because of national government policy.

The Society has engaged with the development of the new Swale Local Plan, most particularly in addressing the site selection. The processes through which local and neighbourhood plans are developed and the consultation procedures used are regulated by central government. The extensive Swale process can be examined here. District and parish councils are required to comply with these nationally determined procedures. In Swale, there was a Regulation 18 consultation followed by the development of a draft plan by planning officers overseen by the Local Plan Panel of elected councillors and the full Council through the normal processes of representative government. The Faversham Society was able to follow and engage in these processes, as could the parish councils and the electorate.

The Faversham Society has had sufficient time to undertake a detailed assessment of all the sites proposed for housing development and to consult our members. The results of those site assessments can be found here. We were able to engage in the debate about where the houses should be allocated by Swale and lobbied our elected Borough and Town representatives.

We are now at the Regulation 19 stage, where the nationally determined process permits us only to comment on the detail in the plan. Swale has a Duty to Cooperate and ensure that its plan is Legally Compliant. The other test is Soundness. The criteria for soundness are in para. 35 of the NPPF; it needs to be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with the NPPF. These limits on the consultation are imposed by central government through the NPPF. They

are not Swale's responsibility. The national planning system has over the last decade or two been tilted towards making building easier and local authorities have very limited powers, for example to require green building. While the Faversham Society believes that solar panels should be incorporated into the design of all new houses rather than installed on land that was otherwise intended for reversion to saltmarsh, it recognises that neither the Local Plan nor the Neighbourhood Plan has the authority to require that.

Housing

Housing allocation in the Swale Local Plan

Numbers: Central government uses an algorithm to impose housing targets that districts are obliged to achieve. Failure to achieve these targets renders the Borough vulnerable to speculative applications from developers.

The government of the day determines how many houses Swale must build, setting both numbers and dates by which the targets must be met. Swale has to have both a five-year housing land supply and achieve the targets on the schedule set by national government. District Councils do not build houses; they can only grant permission for developers to build. Developers will only deliver when they can realise what they regard as a reasonable price for the dwellings they build. If the government's housebuilding targets are not met, Swale is vulnerable to unwanted developments for example, at North Street, Abbeyfields or west of Faversham. Unfortunately, developers can realise good prices for houses built around Faversham, and they constantly look for opportunities to build around us.

National government requires that districts permit developers to build a defined number of housing units by dates determined by central government. Local planning authorities then have to allocate sites and make this as palatable as possible to local residents. In doing this, they have to allocate land which developers can profitably develop.

Local Housing Need

The nationally determined housing numbers do not reflect local needs. It defines only numbers of houses, not types of housing. The Faversham Community Land Trust commissioned a Housing Needs Survey from specialist research organisation, Arc4. They found that households would need a minimum income

of £30,590 per annum to afford the lowest cost affordable homeownership option. An income of £56,186 per annum would be required to afford the entry-level market house price. Households seeking rented accommodation would need a combined income of £33,264 to afford rented accommodation.

Entry-level market housing in Faversham is not affordable to many households. Arc4's research found that 1,881 genuinely affordable units need to be built for purchase and rent over the next five years to house Faversham people. That is 376 per year. Faversham needs a mix of genuinely affordable housing. The research found 211 people couch surfing in Faversham, and we know of families where a son or daughter is living in a shed in the back garden. Faversham is not alone in experiencing the housing crisis. To address Faversham's housing problems, we need to build a different kind of housing to that favoured by developers.

The survey found that we need:

Small family homes (2 or 3-bedrooms), small homes for singles and couples and small homes to enable older people to downsize;
Houses for first time buyers, social rented housing for low-income households and housing suited to frail elderly or disabled people.

The Swale Local Plan Housing Allocation

In July, 2020 we expressed our preference for Option A of the three that were identified by Swale, stating that: "Our preference is Option A. Central government requires that we take some more housing. Option A presents the most equitable distribution across Swale, with 30% windfall across the district we would still almost certainly be taking a large part of the additional 3,000 homes."

We share Swale's regret that central government's housing targets for the Borough cannot be met "on brownfield sites in sustainable locations/within settlement confines and on land at low risk of flooding within existing settlements and on land with the least environmental or amenity value."

Swale councillors decided on Option C in July 2020. That decision was debated and discussed nine months ago, and the Society expressed its strong opposition then to what amounts to a disproportionately large and unfair allocation of

additional housing to Faversham. Neither MP wants to see further housing in their constituency, and they are both campaigning for the housing to be in the other's constituency

The Society's site assessments played a part in ensuring that there was no further large-scale housing development west of the town, where the impacts of additional housing would be most damaging in particular because of the increased traffic and resulting pressure on the road network.

The avoidance of large-scale housing development to the west of the town has also reduced the possibility of a road being built from the Western Link roundabout to the M2 at some point in the future. This is important to prevent the risk of a major highway being put through the Syndale Valley.

Although the Society remains strongly opposed to the development of extensive housing to the east, we have concluded that – if additional housing is imposed upon us, we cannot walk away - rather we must work to mitigate its worst effects. We are determined that the mistakes of the past should not be repeated.

Risk of Unwanted Planning Applications from Developers

If there is not a five-year housing land supply in the Swale, then we are vulnerable to unwanted speculative planning applications for large-scale housing developments. The land around Faversham is particularly vulnerable because of the sale prices, which are achieved around our town. Unfortunately, Faversham has strong viability, defined by central government as 15-20% of the gross development value, this in addition to the landowner premium.

We learnt a bitter lesson in Faversham about the dangers of speculative development when there is not a five-year land supply for housing[1]. The Borough is vulnerable to developer-led development whenever there is not a five-year housing land supply. If Swale fails to meet the government's Housing Delivery Test the national Planning Inspectorate is highly likely to approve developers' appeals. The Perry Court planning application was finally accepted after a heated debate because rejection would have resulted in punitive costs being imposed by the Planning Inspectorate when the applicant appealed. This development breached the A2 and paved the way for Faversham's expansion.

There is currently a planning application resubmitted for up to 180 dwellings on Abbey Fields [20/500015/OUT]. This site is not scheduled for development under either Bearing Fruits or the current draft plan. The applicant in their covering letter, points out that “the Council is not able to demonstrate a five year supply of housing with the latest published position 4.6 years supply.” In these circumstances, the national government’s National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that “permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF as a whole.” The applicant is able to appeal to the Inspectorate if Swale rejects their application. The role of the Inspectorate is to ensure that planning law is enforced and to apportion costs.

Infrastructure

Roads: the Society is very concerned about the increased traffic congestion and pollution likely to result from the additional housing. Regrettably, this is not sufficient grounds to reject development. We support plans to turn the A2 into the Watling Street functioning as a town street. It can no longer function as a “bypass” to the south of our town. It now runs through Faversham.

Mobility: the Society will continue to support 20’s Plenty, active mobility through walking and cycling and the creation of additional paths and cycleways to link new developments to the town and to the surrounding countryside.

Schools: two new primary schools and a new secondary school are planned.

Primary Health Care: both GP Practices have applications in for expansion; decision making about the provision of primary care for the town rests with those practices and the NHS Integrated Care System for Kent and Medway.

Dentists: the new dental surgery has significantly increased the availability of dentistry. There are still plans for another dental surgery in the former Iceland.

Air Quality

The Society shares the concerns of many Faversham residents about pollution from exhausts and road dust. The NPPF makes passing references to the

desirability of avoiding development which reduces air quality. In paragraph 181 there is a reference to the “cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas”. The NPPF advises that:

“Opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement. So far as possible these opportunities should be considered at the plan-making stage, to ensure a strategic approach and limit the need for issues to be reconsidered when determining individual applications.”

We are as dissatisfied with the provisions in the Draft Local Plan on Air Quality as many residents but have not been able to determine where or how Swale could go further, given central government policy and the NPPF.

Enforcement

We are concerned about the extent to which planners at Swale Borough Council will be able to enforce the plan. We are worried that there are no clear tests, clear definitions of what constitutes compliance or non-compliance for some of the planning objectives.

Despite our reservations on housing proposals, there are other proposals to commend in the Draft Local Plan. The Society:

is pleased to see the prominence given to addressing the climate and biodiversity crises.

- strongly supports the emphasis on improving skill and linking learning and employment opportunities. Low pay in Faversham is a challenge that results in families needing to leave the town to find affordable housing.
- is pleased to see the references to heritage, reduced congestion and air quality issues in the vision for Faversham.

[1] <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/faversham/news/perry-court-approved-93571/>

FAVERSHAM SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



The Faversham Society Newsletter is edited by Stephen Rayner. Contributions are welcomed, and should be received by midday on the 15th of the month before publication, preferably by email to favnewsletter@gmail.com or at the Fleur de Lis, 10-13 Preston Street, Faversham, Kent ME13 8NS, marked for newsletter editor. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Faversham Society or of the editor. The editor's decision is final.

ADVERTISING

Clubs, societies, organisations and businesses are encouraged to advertise in the newsletter. The cost is £40 a page (discounts are available for block booking). The minimum boxed ad measures 59mm x 93mm (or equivalent) and costs £10. If interested, please email the editor. Cheques should be made payable to the Faversham Society and sent to Jan West at the address above.

DIGITAL EDITION

Please consider saving the society printing costs by receiving your newsletter by email. Contact the membership secretary at fleurmem@hotmail.com.

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FAVERSHAM SOCIETY OPENING



From Monday 12th April the second-hand bookshop in Gatefield Lane will be open from 10am to 3.30pm Monday to Saturday (closed Sundays) and the Fleur VIC shop will be open from 10am to 1pm Sunday to Thursday and from 10am to 4pm Friday & Saturday

PLEASE CONSULT THE MAIN SOCIETY WEB SITE FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION AT WWW.FAVERSHAMSOCIETY.ORG

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